855 862 883 the elder child, except that they allow the child some freedom to run around the sitio, or go outside the sitio with other adults in order to go visiting.[1]

The adolescent children, especially those going to school, have complete freedom of movement within the community. They are sent to visit their grandmothers, to deliver little presents, or they are sent to ask for borrowed things. They also bring news and gossip back and forth between households. Their role as [585] messengers is sometimes formalized, as during weddings when children are sent ahead to announce the arrival of the bride, and her family, to the groom's household.

857 868 562 Pre-adolescent girls have the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings, and are initiated into the woman's work at an early age. They are trained by their mothers in making tortillas, carrying water, sweeping and sewing. They can go visiting on their own, and play outside the home with other girls before and after school, if they are regular school goers.

882 562 [291] After the first menstruation (and sometimes a little before if they show signs of maturity), they change from the light cotton skirt into the traditional dark blue nagua (tubular skirt) and red faja (sash), and are considered marriageable (solteritas or tek' el). At this point, they are expected to stay within the homestead grounds, except if they are told to bring water or if they go with compañía (company) to the afternoon rezo (praying

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[1] In extreme cases, when the elder child shows extreme signs of distress (crying long hours and refusing to eat anything), it will be given to a woman relative living in other household, usually the paternal grandmother or a married sister without children. This, however, is extremely rare.

session in Church). Water carrying is associated with courting, and the bachelors stay around the paths that connect the houses of their sweethearts with the well to which they go to fetch water, expecting to receive some indication of acceptance on their part, and if they are literate, to hand them a love letter. Girls, on these occasions, are expected to behave modestly and to be embarrassed. If not, they are usually judged as alocadas (lightheaded) and not fit for marriage.

The concept of tener su compañía runs throughout all activity, at all ages. Having company means protection from the supernatural on a long trip, help around the house, harmonious social relations with age mates and kinsmen, and insurance against loneliness. Older women who are left alone in a house for several days will "borrow" a younger girl, a son's daughter for example, to keep them company, and a young wife going to market or to get firewood is usually expected to find company to do so. If not, she can well meet a strange man on the road, and get sick from verguenza (sickness assumed to originate from shame at being placed in an anomalous or embarrassing social situation) or espanto (fear and soul loss).

Boys (kerem and tek' el) do not have as many restrictions of behavior or of movement as girls after puberty, but they are also expected to have their company. They start working with their fathers around the age of ten, depending on their physical strength, but in the beginning, it is not a serious occupation. As soon as they become regular workers, they spend their free time with other bachelors and form a compañía or escuadrilla